

Filed for intro on 04/07/97

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 170
By McAfee

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Coach Mack
McCarthy and the 1996-1997 University of
Tennessee Chattanooga mens' basketball team
on reaching the NCAA Tournament's "Sweet
Sixteen".

Underdog

"One attempting to overcome adversity"
Random House Word Menu 1992

"A loser or predicted loser in a struggle or contest"
Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary 1979

WHEREAS, for most of their 1996-1997 season, the phenomenal University of
Tennessee Chattanooga mens' basketball team was an unranked, unappreciated and
unheralded underdog in the classic and truest sense of the word; and

WHEREAS, at each point in the season when others said Chattanooga "couldn't
possibly win", the magnificent Mocs, with a strong belief in their own ability, resolutely declared
"WE CAN", and they DID; and

WHEREAS, the remarkable Mocs won the Southern Conference South Division, with a
fine 11-3 record; and

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WHEREAS, Chattanooga won the coveted Southern Conference Tournament championship by beating Virginia Military Academy 84-62, Davidson 77-70, and Marshall 71-70, on a dramatic heart-stopping last-second put-back shot by Chris Mims; and

WHEREAS, only a 14th seed in the tough NCAA Southeast Regional Tournament, the “Miracle Mocs” astounded onlookers with a stunning 73-70 victory over 17th-ranked and third-seeded Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the Mocs’ next unlikely victim was 19th-ranked and sixth-seeded Illinois, a 14-point favorite, whom they defeated by an incredible 75-63 margin; and

WHEREAS, the Magical/Mighty/Mystical/Cinderella Mocs thus became only the second 14 seed team in the glorious history of the NCAA Tournament, which started in 1939, to reach the exclusive “Sweet Sixteen”; and

WHEREAS, they were also the first Southern Conference team to win two NCAA Tournament games since 1976; and

WHEREAS, Chattanooga finished their memorable season with a great 24-11 mark, an enviable winning percentage of .686; and

WHEREAS, they finished seventh in the nation in the crucial category of rebound margin; and

WHEREAS, their powerful offense averaged 76.5 points per game and their excellent defense allowed just 65.0 points per game; and

WHEREAS, the Moc Mentor, Mack McCarthy, has finally gotten the recognition he so richly deserves. His outstanding overall record in twelve years as head coach is 243-122, which represents the best record ever of any Southern Conference coach. He also is tied for most conference wins in the seventy-six year history of the conference; and

WHEREAS, Coach “Mac” has won seven regular season Southern Conference titles, five Southern Conference Tournament championships, has earned five NCAA Tournament bids and has never had a losing season while at Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, this distinguished head coach was expertly assisted by Associate Head Coach Henry Dickerson, who is widely regarded as one of the best recruiters in the country; Assistant Coach John P. Gibson; and Assistant Coach Jon Goddard; and

WHEREAS, this tremendously talented team was led by sharpshooter senior sensation Johnny Taylor, Southern Conference Player of the Year, who was also selected First Team All-Southern Conference and Southern Conference All-Tournament; Willie Young, a First Team All-Southern Conference and Southern Conference All-Tournament choice; and Chris Mims, a Second Team All-Southern Conference and Southern Conference All-Tournament honoree; and

WHEREAS, the other members of this notable squad, each of whom made a significant contribution to the success of the team, were: Haris Begicevic; Marquis Collier, Preston Hawkins, Billy Hutchins, Keynon Lake; Akintoye Oloko; David Phillips, and Lincoln Walters; and

WHEREAS, the hard-working manager was Jason Carter and the fine trainer was Scott Johnson; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pause in our deliberations to specially recognize this exemplary team, who has followed the song "You've Got to Have Heart" en-route to their many accomplishments; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor and congratulate Coach Mack McCarthy and the 1996-1997 University of Tennessee Chattanooga mens' basketball team on reaching the NCAA Tournament's "Sweet Sixteen" and wish them well in their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation to the school and each person named above, with this final clause omitted from such copy.